

Summer 2007

Los Angeles County Mental Health Magazine

Minds & Matters

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Message from the Director

"It's summertime, and the living is easy." Well not exactly, I guess. It's summertime, and we are in the middle of a hot streak of continuing change and transformation. Some of the most obvious and important changes that we are facing have come from changes in our County administrative structure. David E. Janssen, the Los Angeles County's long-time and wildly successful County Administrative Officer, officially became the County Executive Officer in June with the delegated authority to hire, fire and evaluate most Department Heads and then told the Board he would not return after he goes on vacation on July 18. In preparation for this move, Mr. Janssen chose five talented administrators to become Deputy Chief Executive Officers (DCEOs) with authority over groups of departments with similar functions. The good news for DMH was the same as the bad news: that Sheila Shima, our extraordinarily gifted Chief Deputy Director, would become the DCEO over Health, Mental Health, and Public Health. Luckily, Robin Kay, the Deputy Director for Older Adult Program Administration, has agreed to become our Acting Chief Deputy Director through a recruitment period, and Cathy Warner has agreed to become our Acting Deputy Director for Older Adult Program Administration. As if that were not enough changes Jeremy Cortez, who has provided great leadership as Financial Officer and acting as Administrative Deputy left DMH to fill a similar role in the new Department of Public Health, and we added Eduardo Vega to our team as the new Chief of Empowerment and Advocacy Division.

All of these changes were really important, but the most significant things happening this summer are the improvements in care that are starting to happen because of the additional funds and the transformational planning that have happened because of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). About 60% of the Adult Full Service Partnership (FSP) slots are filled as well as 40% of the Transition Age Youth and Older Adult FSP slots. Some of the Wellness Centers have started to operate; most of the systems navigators are in place; all but one of the Psychiatric Urgent Care centers are operational; field capable clinical services for older adults are seen as very effective; and, in general, implementation of our Community Services and Supports Plan is proceeding nicely. As Scott Gold, a *Los Angeles Times* investigative reporter looking into the MHSA implementations, said in a televised appearance, "When MHSA programs work, they work amazingly well, that is why it is so important to see that they are implemented properly."

I also believe that all of us who have worked so hard in our Stakeholder process and the planning of MHSA are starting to feel like all of that work is paying off in terms of clients having better lives. I had the opportunity recently to visit the DMH clinic at Rio Hondo and listen to the clients describe how the integrated treatment of their mental illness and their addiction, that was made possible through MHSA, had led them to a level of recovery from both addiction and mental illness that neither they nor their families had thought possible. Hearing those stories made me know that all of the difficulties and the turmoil of the changes that we are going through are, in fact, really worth it. So let's keep it going no matter how hot it gets this summer.

Sincerely,

Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.
Director of Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health



Employees Recognition News & Notes

Retirements

Names & Years of County Service

January 2007

Linda B. Liu
(34 years)

February 2007

Sharon Bushere
(34 years)

Victoria Guzman
(30 years)

David Leslie
(34 years)

Charles Lovely
(40 years)

Sandra Watkins
(36 years)

March 2007

Regina B. Balagtas
(15 years)

Charlotte Carter
(34 years)

Mark A. Fish &
Pauline P. Smith
(8 years)

Phyllis L. Stewart
(28 years)

Hilton G. Tarver
(28 years)

Bertha Toomer
(34 years)

Daisy Youssef
(32 years)

Source: Kimberly Snell
Human Resources Bureau

ACOSTA NAMED "DMH NURSE OF THE YEAR"



Pictured above: Maria Acosta and DMH Medical Director Roderick Shaner, M.D.

Los Angeles County honored its outstanding employees during the Quality and Productivity Commission's "Public Service Recognition Week" (May 7-13).

10 Department of Mental Health (DMH) employees were nominated by their supervisors as 2007 "DMH Nurse of the Year." The nominees were as follows: Bernardo Begonia of Urgent Care Services Project, Elizabeth Bower of West Valley Mental Health Center, Elvie Colabella of Long Beach Mental Health Center, Joan Farias of San Fernando Valley Mental Health Center, Carmen Loya of Program Review, Katrina Pratcher of Hollywood Mental Health Center, Danny Redmond of Older Adults Program, Phillip Viramontes of Augustus F. Hawkins Urgent Care Center, and Rebecca Yumul of Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. All of the nominees were recognized at a special awards luncheon held at the Proud Bird Restaurant located near Los Angeles International Airport on May 8.

Maria Acosta, R.N., LPS, was named the recipient of the "DMH Nurse of the Year." Ms. Acosta works for the Emergency Outreach Bureau's Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART), a collaborative program with the Los Angeles Police Department to assist field police officers whenever they come into contact with suspected mentally ill persons.



Rio Hondo Mental Health Center Co-Occurring Disorders Program staff was honored by Fourth District Mental Health Deputy Richard Espinosa at the kickoff event of "May is Mental Health Month" on May 2



L.A. County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich & Director Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., honored the Santa Clarita Mental Health Center at the Mental Health Community Forum in Valencia on June 4



Acting Chief Deputy Director Robin Kay, Ph.D., and Director Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., honored District Chief Mary Marx, L.C.S.W., as "Manager of the Year" at the DMH Employees Recognition Award ceremony held at Descanso Gardens on June 12

The Los Angeles County's new public employee recognition program, "L.A. County S.T.A.R.S." (Special Talents for Achieving Remarkable Service) honored Julie Valdez of the ACCESS Center (March 20), Wendi Tovey of the San Fernando Valley Mental Health Center (April 21) for their exceptional achievements in the categories of Service (Providing the public with easy access to quality information and services that are both beneficial and responsive) and Workforce (Enhancing the quality and productivity of the County workforce) Excellence. Joining Valdez and Tovey was the Rio Hondo Mental Health Center who became the first directly-operated clinic to be honored this year (June 20).

Valdez, Tovey, and Rio Hondo Mental Health Center staff photographs are enshrined on a wall in front of the Chief Executive Office Public Affairs Office located on the third floor at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration. To nominate a co-worker for consideration, contact Vicki Pierce at (213) 738-3089.

For more information on LA County Stars, go to <http://stars@lacounty.gov>.

In Our Own Words:

“Beating the Odds...”

Transforming Our Lives”

Written by

**Sarah
& Deborah**

**Photographs by
Ken Kondo**





Minds and Matters was invited to hear the compelling and triumphant stories of current and former clients and consumers who have recovered from their mental illness. One by one they approached the podium, nervous and scared. Each one ended their speeches with confidence as the DMH staff gave them a standing ovation, but two stood out above all of the rest, Sarah and Deborah.

Sarah began her presentation by saying, I am as happy as Julie Andrews in the movie "Mary Poppins." Things are going well for me now, but there was a time when things were not going so good.

My childhood was not easy. It was unfortunately plagued with abuse. I was not allowed to talk or express myself. I became frustrated and enraged with anger. My dad passed away, and later on in life my son left me. It was a double whammy, and this led to a lot of things that were wrong with me.

My bouts with depression were severe. I was bedridden because of it. As a child, I still remember closing the shades to the windows in my room, and I would just sit on my bed in the darkness. While my friends and family attended school, I did not. I was unable to eat. I could not concentrate which was one of the reasons why, I decided not to go to school. I was fearful that the other children would make fun of me. I was scared and embarrassed of my condition. Because of my lack of schooling, I had difficulty in reading and writing which made me more frustrated and angry. Eventually, my thinking was so scattered that people were afraid of me.

Approximately 14 years ago, I was referred to Compton Mental Health Center (CMHC). I attended and participated in the group and treatment programs. I did this for the next nine years.

In 2002, I met my guardian angel, Rosemarie Andrews, an Occupational Therapist who operates the CMHC's Work Center. If it was not for her, I would not be here today.

I did not know if I was going to survive as I entertained thoughts of ending my life, but Ms. Andrews told me that there was hope, and that I could recover from my mental illness.

She never gave up on me and convinced me to participate in an arts program. Ms. Andrews told me, art can reach a person, even those who have difficulty in reading and writing, and that was me. Art has helped me to concentrate, organize my thoughts, but most importantly, it allowed me to express feelings.

My therapist Demetrius K. Aguebor helped me write a 10-page letter when my dad died. There in the letter I admitted to suffering from bouts of depression, and it helped me a lot.

To this day, I get frustrated sometimes, but when I am doing my artwork, two dimensional design, somehow my brain is stimulated, and I function better in regards to my memory and concentration levels.

In 2003, I began to volunteer at CMHC as a part-time Peer Advocate, in addition to serving as a member of the CMHC's Consumers Council. The council has been developing a program in reference to the themes of recovery and wellness.

My long range goal is to some day work at CMHC as a full-time Peer Advocate. Recently, I completed the 16-week training course. When asked the question, why do I want to be a Peer Advocate? I tell them to hopefully inspire other clients and consumers to successfully recover from their mental illness.

Sarah is attending Los Angeles City Community College majoring in psychology. She also serves as an intern with the United States Veterans Administration and CMHC.

For more information about the CMHC's Work Center and its programs, call (310) 668-6920.

Opening up crumpled up pieces of paper as she wheeled herself to the podium was Deborah. She began her speech in a quiet voice...I have raised three children...I was diagnosed bi-polar and manic depressive. I was homeless and used drugs. Finally after living in miserable conditions for so many years, I decided to ask for help. I got help from my psychiatrists, therapists, and medication.

I stand in front of you, and proudly say, I am on the road to recovery!

One of the organizations that has helped me get back on the road to recovery was Project Return the Next Step. There, I received training on how to be a Peer Advocate. I completed the course. For two years I worked at Exodus Day Rehab Program, and now I am a jobs coach at Easter Seals. I also have been clean and sober for three-and one-half years. It took for me to get sick, ask for help, and have others help me out, and now, I want to help others who are experiencing what I just went through.

I am a student at Southwest Community College. In three semesters, I hold a 4.0 grade point average majoring in psychology. One day, hopefully soon, I will enroll at Cerritos Community College and continue my studies in psychology and social sciences.

SPRING 2007

DMH EVENTS

February



Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Director Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., Dr. Steve Mayberg, Ph.D., Director of State of California Department of Mental Health and Richard Van Horn, CEO, National Mental Health Association of Greater Los Angeles addressed U.S. Representatives Patrick J. Kennedy (Rhode Island) and Jim Ramstad (Minnesota) at the Los Angeles Forum on "Mental Health and Addiction Parity" hosted by U.S. Representative Grace F. Napolitano (38th District) at Cerritos Community College Student Center on February 10.

Picture above: U.S. Representative Patrick J. Kennedy and Director Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.



Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke welcomed the attendees to the African American Mental Health Conference held at the Los Angeles Convention Center on February 15.

Jennifer Holliday brought down the house with her emotional rendition of "You're Going to Love Me" from the Broadway Show "Dreamgirls." Holliday performed four songs during her presentation in front of an audience that included mental health professionals, social workers, nurses, clients, consumers, and family members, about her journey in dealing with depression, and she recovered from it which she experienced during time period of her biggest success while on Broadway.

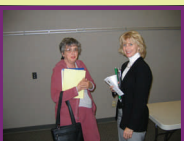
Sources: CBS News, E-Entertainment and L.A. Times

Pictured below: Jennifer Holliday and Conference Committee members



L.A. County Department of Mental Health Service Area 3 (San Gabriel Valley) and Emergency Outreach Bureau's Psychiatric Mobile Response Team (PMRT) celebrated Chinese New Year at the Vietnamese TET and Chinese Lantern Festivals held at Whittier Narrows Park located in South El Monte on February 24 and March 3.

Picture above: Chinese dragons, Service Area 3 Coordinator Jaime Renteria and PMRT Chuck Lennon.



L.A. County Department of Mental Health District Chiefs Cathy Warner (Service Area 8—pictured on the right) & Debbie Innes-Gomberg, and Gwen Lewis-Reid presented an update at the "Transforming the Mental Health System from Legislation to Implementation of the California Mental Health Services Act" hosted by the League of Women's Voters at Redondo Beach Main Library on February 26.

Source: Beach Reporter

March



Edmund D. Edelman Westside Mental Health Center celebrated its 10th Anniversary on March 1. Deputy Director Robin Kay, Ph.D., presented retired Los Angeles County Supervisor Edmund D. Edelman with a beautiful painting (pictured to the left). As part of the celebration, the center hosted an open house that featured an art show, wellness center showcase, a performance by the Edelman Theatre Group, literary journal reading, music, and a preview of Elyn Saks, Associate Dean and Orrin B. Evans, Professor of Law, Psychology, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the USC School of Law upcoming book, "The Center Cannot Hold: My Journey Through Madness."



30 children who lost their loved ones joined the A.M.E. Grant Youth Choir and solo vocalist Zadzia Pittman in singing an inspirational and emotional rendition of "I Believe I Can Fly" in front of a standing ovation crowd at the

Third Annual Childhood Grief & Traumatic Loss Conference held at the Bob Hope/Burbank Airport Marriott Hotel and Convention Center on March 8.

Welcoming the conference attendees, comprised of mental health professionals, medical, social workers, and deputy probation officers, included Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Fifth District, Margaret Henry, Supervising Judge, Los Angeles County Dependency Court, Director of Department of Mental Health Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., Department of Children and Family Services Director Patricia L. Ploehn and Charles Sophy, M.D. (Pictured below).

Sources: Our Weekly & FOX 11 News



April



More than 400 attended the 11th Annual Stepping In Conference "Youth on the Edge...The Risk of Adolescence" hosted by Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe and College

Hospitals of Cerritos and sponsored by Mental Health Commission, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and NAMI Los Angeles County. The half-day conference was held at the Long Beach Marriott Hotel on April 4.



More than 200 attended the "Connections for Life" Kickoff Celebration at the Los Angeles Wilshire Plaza Hotel on April 17. The celebration featured clients and consumers who have recovered from their mental illness as each one presented their life stories of hope, resiliency, and recovery. The event was sponsored by the L.A. County Department of Mental Health and Mental Health Commission. (Pictured to the left: Commissioner Victoria A. Sofro).

May



Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke and Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., DMH Director, joined mental health professionals, advocates, consumers, and the Asian community in recognizing May as "Mental Health Awareness and Asian Pacific Heritage" Month at a press conference held at the footsteps of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration on May 8.

Source: The Korea Daily



Los Angeles County celebrated the Second Annual National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day at the United American Indian Involvement Community Center on May 8. The event featured information booths from the County's American Indian Counseling Center located in Cerritos, Children's Hospital of Los Angeles, youth art exhibition and Native American drum and dance performance from the children participating in the center's program.

Sources: DMH e* NEWS & Chinese Daily News

The Los Angeles County Mental Health Commission honored seven individuals at its Eighth Annual Program Recognition and Volunteer Awards luncheon held at the Music Center on May 10. The recipients included the following: *Outstanding Family Member* Rosina Erlich, *Outstanding Consumers* Belanie Brown & William Lemley, *Outstanding Program* Lutheran Social Services of Southern California Caring Neighbors Program, *Chairman's Award* Ruth Hollman, *Personal Legacy Award* John D. Griffin, LCSW, and *Mental Health Commission Award* James C. Allen.



200-plus attended the "Annual Mental Health Conference for Faith Leaders" hosted by Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health and held at The California Endowment Center's for Healthy Communities located in downtown Los Angeles on May 21.

The conference focused on "Faith-based Leadership in Fighting Stigma," "How Clergy Can Help to Erase Stigma," "The Hope and Recovery from Mental Illness," and "Family, Faith and Recovery." (Pictured above left to right: Rosina Erlich and Nancy Carter, President of NAMI of Greater of Los Angeles).



Long Beach Mental Health Center celebrated "May is Mental Health Month" with an open house and dedication of two murals designed by Trace Fukuhara, Artistic Director of Pacific Winds Arts and painted by the clients and consumers to depict the essence of Long Beach on May 30. Also, the staff hosted a graduation ceremony as 10 clients and consumers were awarded "Bear Hugs" symbolic of them graduating from the center's program to the MHS funded The Wellness Center.

Source: Press-Telegram

NEWS & NOTES

SHIMA NAMED L.A. COUNTY DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Sheila A. Shima, Chief Deputy Director, has been selected by Chief Executive Officer David E. Janssen as one of five Deputy Chief Executive Officers that will oversee Los Angeles County's 39 departments and two commissions. She will be responsible for the Health and Mental Health Cluster. During her tenure with Department of Mental Health (DMH), Ms. Shima was instrumental in the development and implementation of the STATS Team. Originally, she began her County career as a Legislative Analyst/Public Information Officer with DMH. With Ms. Shima's departure, Director Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., named Robin Kay, Ph.D., as Acting Chief Deputy Director and Cathy Warner as Acting Deputy Director of the Older Adult Program Administration. All new assignments were effective on June 18.

Source: Chief Executive Office

WALLENSAK JOINS DMH AS ADMINISTRATIVE DEPUTY



Lyn Wallensak was appointed to the position of Administrative Deputy, Finance and Administration, on May 1. Ms. Wallensak served previously as the Administrative Deputy for the Los Angeles County Parks & Recreation Department, where her responsibilities included preparing and monitoring the Department's operating, special funds, special districts, and capital budget; providing accounting, procurement, and management services, including fixed assets, and portable equipment inventories; directing human resources operations; oversight of the risk management and monitoring services contracts, concession agreements, lease agreements, and other specialized contracts. She also worked for the Chief Administrative Office, as a Principal Analyst, in Capital Projects/Debt. Management, where she was in charge of preparing and monitoring the capital projects budgets for the Department of Health Services and Mental Health.

LOS ANGELES TIMES PUBLISHER'S FORUM: MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT (MHSA)



California State Senator Darrell Steinberg (Sixth District), author of MHSA, joined Director Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.; MHSA Peer Advocate Stephen Rivera; Executive Director Jim Preis of the Mental Health Advocacy Series;

Carla Jacobs, Board Member, Treatment Advocacy Center; and Staff Writer Scott Gold at the *Los Angeles Times* Publisher's Forum held at the KTLA 5 "The CW" Larry McCormick Stage #7 in Hollywood on June 20.

The forum titled "Our State of Mental Health: Is the Millionaire's Tax Paying Off?" featured four block segments that focused on the following: "What is the Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63)?", "How Will the MHSA Improve Health of the Mentally Ill Homeless?", "Is There a Role for Involuntary Treatment?", and "The Overall Crisis in Mental Health Funding." Members of the audience were allowed to ask questions of the panelists during the forum. Serving as co-hosts of the forum were Frank Buckley ("Prime News Weekend Edition") and Michaela Pereira ("Morning Show"). To watch the entire forum, go to http://dmh.lacounty.gov/Press_Room.asp.

Pictured above from left to right: Stephen Rivera, Frank Buckley, Michaela Pereira, Director Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., and State Senator Darrell Steinberg

MHSA IMPLEMENTATION & GROWTH REPORTS PRESENTED TO STAKEHOLDERS & DELEGATES



The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health hosted a pair of public hearings for the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)

Implementation & Progress Community Services and Supports (CSS) Report for fiscal year 2005-06 and CSS GROWTH Plan Report for fiscal year 2007-08 on May 14 (Grand Wilshire Hotel) and May 24 (Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration Room 739).

The public hearings provided stakeholders and delegates updates on the next steps for MHSA in reference to the Prevention & Early Intervention and Workforce Education and Training planning processes. For more information, go to <http://dmh.lacounty.info/stp/>.

Pictured above: Attendees at the May 24 public hearing

LONG BEACH MENTAL HEALTH CENTER CONSUMERS EMPLOYMENT COALITION "RECOVERY, HOPE, WELLNESS" CAREER EXPOSITION SERIES (JULY 13)

Long Beach Mental Health Center will host its second in a series of recovery, hope and wellness career event at the Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services Miller Family Educational Center (3820 Cherry Avenue, Long Beach 90807) on July 13 (8 a.m.-1:30 p.m.). Participating in the career exposition include: The Village ISA, St. Mary's Medical Center, Long Beach City College, Los Angeles County Department of Human Resources, The Wellness Center in Long Beach, R.O.A.D.S. Program, Los Angeles Unified School District, and California Department of Rehabilitation. Consumers are encouraged to bring their resumes. For more information, call (562) 570-7987.

13TH ANNUAL LATINO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONFERENCE (OCTOBER 2-4)

The 13th Annual Latino conference theme "Transformation & Recovery in Latino Behavioral Health" will be hosted by the Latino Behavioral Health Institute (LBHI). The conference will be held at the Los Angeles Airport Marriott (5855 West Century Boulevard, Los Angeles 90045) from October 2-4. The three-day conference will feature 50-plus workshops and sessions focusing on the many new ideas in Latino Behavioral Health for more effective interventions. For more information, go to lbhi.org or call (818) 831-3395.

13TH ANNUAL ASIAN AMERICAN MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE (OCTOBER 5)

The 13th Annual Asian American Mental Health Training Conference "Relationship, Intimacy and Sexuality in Asian Americans" will be held at the Long Beach Marriott Hotel. For more information, contact Dr. Sam Keo at (213) 251-6869.

A FINAL THOUGHT



The National Association of Counties (NaCo) has selected the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health and Mental Health Commission as one of the recipients of the 2007 Achievement Award for its "Stigma Blasting Early Intervention Program." The concept originated from the Mental Health Commission's adopted goals for 2004-05, "Stigma Blasting" program aimed at children in preschool to second grade. Most organizations addressing stigma target

teenagers and adults, but the Commission believes that by that age prejudices are a entrenched and are much more difficult to combat. The message the Commission wants young children to embrace is that it is OK to be different, and to be friends who is not just like they are. Commissioners believe that if young children become comfortable with these concepts, they will be more likely to accept people with physical or mental disabilities, to embrace those of a different color, to respect people with varied religious and ethnic backgrounds throughout their lives. Through a partnership, students from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena developed a series of programs titled "Super Parents," "BrightSide," "Virtual Pen Pals," and "Difference is Good" (D.I.G.) targeting both the children and their parents/legal guardians.

Hopefully, each city, whether it be incorporated or unincorporated in Los Angeles County, will host a "D.I.G." Week. Congratulations to all who were involved in making this become a reality. For more information and to view a video presentation of the program, go to <http://dmh.lacounty.gov/newsandresources/mediacoverage>.

Pictured above left to right: Frank C. Baron, CALMHB/C Rep., Barry Perrou, PsyD, Ilean Rabens, MA, Director Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., and Chairman Jerry Lubin, AICP

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